

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 293929

NODIS
FOR SCRANTON ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT GENEVA 9460 SENT ACTION SECSTATE 27 NOV 76

QUOTE S E C R E T GENEVA 9460

NODIS

FOR SCHAUFLE FROM WISNER

DEPT PASS LONDON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, RH, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA CONFERENCE: DATE OF INDEPENDENCE SETTLED

1. THE PATRIOTIC FRONT CALLED ON IVOR RICHARD AT 6:30 P.M.
LOCAL TIME ON NOVEMBER 26 TO SAY THEY WOULD ACCEPT THE
LATEST BRITISH FORMULA FOR SETTLING THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE
IF THE BRITISH WOULD AGREE TO TWO MINOR MODIFICATIONS. THE
BRITISH, AFTER LOOKING AT THE CHANGES, ACCEPTED. NKOMO,
PRESUMABLY TO FULLY COMMIT HIS COLLEAGUE, SUGGESTED THAT
MINUTES BE DRAWN UP AND AGREED TO.

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2. THE TEXT, AS FINALLY ACCEPTED, READS AS FOLLOWS. THE

MODIFICATIONS ARE UNDERLINED.

QUOTE: HAVING CONSULTED A NUMBER OF DELEGATIONS, I HAVE FOUND A GENERAL WISH FOR THE CONFERENCE TO SET ITSELF A TARGET DATE FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION OF ITS WORK. I HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED TO ORGANIZE THE REMAINDER OF THE WORK OF THE CONFERENCE, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE OTHER DELEGATIONS, IN SUCH A WAY AS TO FINISH BY 20 DECEMBER 1976. SO FAR AS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ARE CONCERNED, FIXING THAT TARGET DATE WILL NOT PREJUDICE THE DATE OF INDEPENDENCE. IT IS THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT'S FIRM POSITION THAT ALL THE AGREED PROCESSES IN RHODESIA WILL BE COMPLETED IN TIME TO ENABLE INDEPENDENCE TO BE GRANTED BY 1 MARCH 1978. THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT THEREFORE FIX 1 MARCH 1978 AS THE LATEST DATE BY WHICH RHODESIA WILL BECOME INDEPENDENT, AND ON THIS BASIS INDEPENDENCE COULD COME EVEN BY DECEMBER 1, 1977. BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONFERENCE AND AFTER AGREEING ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, THE CONFERENCE WILL REVERT TO THE QUESTION OF FIXING A DATE FOR INDEPENDENCE SO THAT A FIRM DATE CAN BE AGREED UPON. UNQUOTE.

3. RICHARD THEN SUGGESTED THAT THE FRONT JOIN WITHOUT DELAY IN DISCUSSIONS OF THE FORMATION OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. MUGABE DEMURRED AND SAID THAT HE WOULD NEED MORE TIME. IN THE COURSE OF THE CONVERSATION, WHICH LASTED ALMOST AN HOUR, MUGABE REFUSED TO STATE HIS REASONS FOR NEEDING MORE TIME AND HINTED THAT THERE MIGHT BE OTHER MATTERS WHICH REQUIRED DISCUSSION BEFORE INTERIM GOVERNMENT TALKS COULD BEGIN. AT ONE POINT HE SUGGESTED "THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS" MIGHT HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED. HE ALSO SAID HE WAS EXPECTING UNNAMED VISITORS FROM AFRICA. BOTH HE AND NKOMO DISINGENUOUSLY TOLD RICHARD THEY HAD BEEN SO PREOCCUPIED WITH THE QUESTION OF THE DATES THAT THEY HAD NOT HAD TIME TO STUDY FULLY THE CHAIRMAN'S NOTE ON THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

4. UNDER PRESSURE FROM RICHARD, MUGABE RELUCTANTLY ALLOWED HE WOULD ATTEND A BILATERAL MEETING ON NOVEMBER 29. ASKED HOW HE WOULD SPEND THE WEEKEND, MUGABE SAID, "I PLAN
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TO GO SKIING".

5. THE EXCHANGE WITH MUGABE OVER NEXT STEPS LEFT THE BRITISH QUITE UNEASY. IT WAS NOT CLEAR WHETHER MUGABE WAS BEING DIFFICULT IN ORDER TO SAVE FACE OR WHETHER HE SERIOUSLY PLANS TO RAISE EXTRANEIOUS ISSUES LIKE THE CONFERENCES' WORK PROGRAM OR THE FRANCHISE. QUITE POSSIBLY MUGABE'S VISITORS INCLUDE ZIPA FIGURES FROM MOZAMBIQUE

AND HE WILL NEED TO RENEW HIS MANDATE AND PLAN
HIS STRATEGY WITH THEM BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH
SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS.

6. IN VIEW OF MUGABE'S RESISTENCE TO CONTINUING TALKS THE
BRITISH ARE TAKING THE WEEKEND OFF. BRUNGART

UNQUOTE ROBINSON

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